(b) if so, what are the commodities which have potential for trade in these countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) All five Central Asian Republics, namely, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkemnistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrghyzstan, have, in their various contacts with us including at the highest level, repeatedly conveyed their desire to encourage and promote bilateral trade with India.

(b) Potential for trade with these countries exists for a large variety of commodities. Major items that could be exported from India include all varieties of consumer goods, tea, agricultural commodities, pesticides, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods including project export. Main items with potential for import from these countries are minerals including crude oil, liquified natural gas and non-ferrous metals, raw hides and skins, cotton and wool.

2355. [*Transferred to 18th March, 1993.*]

Representation from Tamil Nadu Tanners, Exporters and Importers Association

2356. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the Tamil Nadu Tanners, Exporters and Importers Association about their difficulties arising out of the Government's ban on lighter shade of leather; and

(b) if so, what are the steps taken by Government to remove the difficulties of the small and medium scale leather tanners?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Introduction of free trade in Indian Econoym

2357. DR. ISHWAR CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of advantages to Indian Economy by introduction of free trade;

(b) what are the details of its impact on indigenous items for which free trade has been allowed;

(c) what are the view of big industrialists on the ree trade policy; and

(d) wfhether the idea of free trade

(d) whether the idea of free trade policy has been conceived under the dictates of the U.S. dominated World Bank and I.M.F.?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The liberal trade policy of the Government would facilitate easy availability of imported raw materials, intermediates, components consumables and capital goods from the international market. This would in turn, help to promote the productivity, modernisation and competitiveness of Indian industry and thereby enhance its export capabilities.

(b) Since the announcement of the new Export-Import Policy, exports have shown a higher growth rate of 3.4 per cent in April-December 1992 as compare to a negative growth rate of 3.7 per cent during April-December 1991. Similarly, the Negative growth of 0.1 per cent experienced in industrial production during 1991-92 has been reversed and during April-November, 1992 for which data is available so far, industrial production has recorded a growth rate of 3.9 per cent compare to the corresponding period of last year.

(c) Trade and industry have on the whole welcomed the liberalised trade policy.

(d) No, Sir.

Proposal to export non-Basmati rice

2358. DR. RAMENDRA KUMAR YADAV 'RAVI': Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to export non-basmati rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the foreign exchange likely to be earned therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) With effect from 15.1.93, export superfine non-basmati rice, that is to say non-basmati rice whose export price is not less than US $ 275 per MT (f.o.b.), is allowed freely without a licence. Non-basmati rice whose export price is less than US $ 275 per MT is not permitted to be exported.

(c) During the period from April, 1992 to January, 1993, 2,38,512.4 MTs of Non-basmati rice (including superfine non-basmati rice) valued at Rs. 164.20 crores have been exported.

Proposal to prune the negative list of exports

2359. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to prune the negative list of exports; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and details of the negative list of exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

The details of Negative list of Exports are given in Chapter XVI of the Exim Policy, 1992-97.

(b) Consideration of changes in the Negative List of Exports is an ongoing process keeping in view the needs of Industry and Public Interest.

Signing of new agreement with European Community

2360. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to sign a new cooperation agreement with the European Community for the development of business cooperation;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal retains the positive elements of the existing Indo-EEC Agreement. Besides, it broadens the scope of cooperation further to cover a wide range of subjects.

Imposition of duty on imports by U.S.A.

2361. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that USA have imposed duties on the import